

RETHINK WASTE IN CENTRAL OREGON

Your roadmap for preventing waste in our community.

Reduce

1st

Reuse

2nd

Repair

3rd

4th

Recycling
comes last.

Waste prevention starts before anything reaches a bin. The stuff we buy is one of the biggest drivers of climate change: making, shipping, using, and tossing goods accounts for 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions.¹ Using less stuff is good for people and the planet. Let's rethink waste together!



1st Reduce

The best way to prevent waste is to not create it. We simply can't recycle our way out of the plastic problem. Glass and aluminum can be recycled endlessly, but plastic is only recycled a few times before it's landfilled.²

BORROW INSTEAD OF BUY: Check out tools, kitchen equipment, gear, and more from local resources like the Deschutes Public Library's Library of Things, Central Oregon Tool Library and DIY Cave.

BUY IN BULK AND BRING YOUR OWN CONTAINERS: Fill small containers with just what you need. Less packaging, less waste, and less money spent! Central Oregon Locavore, Local Acres Market, the Pantry, and Cornucopia Natural Foods are a few local options with bulk sections.

CONSOLIDATE ONLINE ORDERS and select slower shipping to reduce packaging waste and carbon emissions. Better yet, shop local.

In the US, 38% of the food we grow and buy is never eaten—wasting money and resources.³ Preventing food waste is a powerful climate solution—even more than composting alone.⁴

LOVE FOOD, NOT WASTE: Take the Rethink Waste Food Waste Challenge to learn what's going to waste in your home and practice strategies to waste less. Support food rescue like HDEFA's Grow & Give program, which redirects excess fresh produce to Central Oregonians experiencing food insecurity.

• RethinkWasteProject.org/foodwaste



2nd Reuse

SOME OF OUR
FAVORITE
SINGLE-USE
SWAPS

ON THE GO: Bring your own mug, water bottle, and food containers. Oregon law now allows restaurants to fill your clean reusable containers for takeout and leftovers!

Reusables beat disposables. Reusable containers skip the PFAS “forever chemicals” coating many disposables that are linked to health and environmental risks.⁵ Plus, a reusable cup can have up to one-tenth the climate impact of a disposable one.⁶

FOR YOUR NEXT PARTY OR EVENT:

Check out reusable dishware from The Environmental Center and partners.

AT HOME: Use reusable cloth napkins to replace paper towels and napkins.

DONATE WORKING ITEMS and shop second-hand first through thrift stores, buy-nothing groups on Facebook, and the Porch Swing app available in Bend.

• RethinkWasteProject.org/reuse



3rd Repair

Knott Landfill will be full soon. Extending the life of what we already own keeps material out of the waste stream.⁷

TAKE IT TO THE EXPERTS:

Bring your broken stuff to our free quarterly Repair Cafés to work on repairs with the help of volunteer fixers. Or take advantage of local repair services like the Gear Fix, Handy Mandy, or the Computer Shop of Redmond.

LEARN TO REPAIR IT yourself with free step-by-step guides and resources at ifixit.com.

• RethinkWasteProject.org/repair

Our everyday choices make a real impact, and advocating for policy changes and business practices that make low-waste choices possible for everyone makes an even bigger one. Visit envirocenter.org/events for upcoming Action Nights and other opportunities to get involved.

1 GAIA, Zero Waste to Zero Emissions, 2022. | 2 Geyer, Jambeck & Law, “Production, Use, and Fate of All Plastics Ever Made,” Science Advances, 2017.. | 3 Oregon DEQ, “Food Systems Strategic Planning,” 2025.. | 4 Project Drawdown, “Reduce Food Loss & Waste,” 2023. | 5 Oregon DEQ, “Foodware Containers and Polystyrene Foam”. | 6 Upstream, Reuse Wins, 2021. | 7 Deschutes County, “Solid Waste.”